DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 121 636 SO 008 950

TITLE Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions of the Federal Interagency Committee on Education.
INSTITUTION Federal Interagency Committee on Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 75
NOTE 20p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Definitions; *Ethnic Groups; *Language Standardization; Minority Groups; *Racial Characteristics; Reports; *Urban Language

ABSTRACT

The report discusses and recommends a taxonomy of ethnic terms for federal agencies to use when collecting, reporting, and maintaining data on race and ethnicity. Standardization is necessary so that whatever categories the different agencies use can be aggregated, disaggregated, or other wise combined so that the data developed by one agency can be used in conjunction with data developing by another agency. A brief introduction provides background information and describes the task of the Federal Interagency Committee on Education (FICE). Recommended categories of race and ethnicity are listed and factors considered in arriving at each heading and definition are discussed. The five basic, recommended racial categories include American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black/Negro, Caucasian/White, and Hispanic. The second part of the report established guidelines on how the proposed categories are to be applied in specific situations, presents two alternative ways to collect data using the suggested categories, and discusses subdividing the five basic categories into particular ethnic subgroups. Lastly, the document makes final recommendations that are endorsed by FICE. (Author/JR)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED121636

Report of the

Ad Hoc Committee

on

Racial and Ethnic Definitions

SP 008 950

FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to SO UD

In our judgement, this document is also of interest to the clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. RC

APRIL 1975

FEB 12 1976

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee

on

Racial and Ethnic Definitions

of the

FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Virginia Y. Trotter, Chairman
Assistant Secretary for Education
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

Bernard Michael
Executive Director

APRIL 1975

CONTENTS

	Page
Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions	iv
Preface	v
Background	1
Recommended Categories	2
Observer vs. Self-Identification	6
Suggested Applications and Procedures for Use of Categories	7
Subgroups	9
Consideration of an "Other" Category	10
Exchange of Data	11
Recommendations	12

FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions

Charles Johnson, Chairman
Bureau of the Census

Pat Berman
Bureau of the Census

Robert Calvert
National Center for Educational Statistics
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education, HEW

Joan Clarke
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Louis H. Conger, Jr.
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Edward Fernandez
Bureau of the Census

Grace Flores
Office for Spanish Surnamed Americans, HEW

Philip Garcia
Department of Housing and Urban Development

*John Hodgdon
Office for Civil Rights, HEW

Lloyd Johnson
Division of Student Support and Special Programs
Office of Education

Adrian Jones
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

*Juanita Lott
Office of Asian American Affairs, HEW

Gaile Maller
Indian Health Service

Leon McGaughey
Department of the Army

Earl F. Mellor
Bureau of Labor Statistics

Abdin Noboa-Rios
National Institute of Education

Paul Planchon
Statistical Policy Division
Office of Management and Budget

Ed Presson
Office of Indian Education
Office of Education

*John F. Putnam
National Center for Educational Statistics
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education, HEW

Odessa Shannon
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Richard C. Simonson (Observer)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, HEW

Milo Sunderhauf
Statistical Policy Division
Office of Management and Budget

Jaime Taronji
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

*Frank E.G. Weil
Office for Civil Rights, HEW

Francis A. Wilson
Law Enforcement Assistance Administration

*Members of Working Group appointed by the chairman to make recommendations to the Ad Hoc Committee on several problem areas. They also participated in preparation of the final report.

PREFACE

The Federal Interagency Committee on Education (FICE) was created by Executive Order in 1964 and currently operates under an updated mandate, Executive Order 11761, issued in January 1974. FICE's functions are to improve coordination of the educational activities of Federal agencies, to identify the Nation's educational needs and goals, and to advise and make recommendations on educational policy to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and, through him, to heads of other agencies and the President.

More than 30 Federal agencies are either members of FICE or regular participants in its activities. Most of FICE's work is carried out through subcommittees which deal with specific areas such as graduate education, educational technology, educational consumer protection, environmental education, education and work, and minority education. At its monthly meetings FICE reviews and acts upon recommendations from its subgroups and arranges for their implementation.

The Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions represents the culmination of one of FICE's most important coordinating tasks. The Ad Hoc Committee has developed terms and definitions for basic categories for Federal agencies to use when collecting, reporting and maintaining data on race and ethnicity. The categories are the product of considerable discussion, disagreement, give-and-take, and compromise on the part of Ad Hoc Committee members. They are to be commended for their determined efforts in this very difficult area.

On April 23, 1975, the Federal Interagency Committee on Education endorsed the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations which begin on page 12. This report reflects the minor changes FICE made in the five basic racial/ethnic categories at that meeting.

A list of members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions begins on p. iv. They received assistance from the FICE staff, particularly Barbara Montgomery, who wrote the various drafts of the report, and Barbara Coates and Mary Cox who typed them.

Bernard Michael
Executive Director
Federal Interagency Committee
on Education

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON RACIAL AND ETHNIC DEFINITIONS

Background

In April 1973 the FICE Subcommittee on Minority Education completed a report entitled, Higher Education for Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and American Indians* FICE endorsed the report and its recommendations and forwarded them to HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger for comment.

Secretary Weinberger showed particular interest in the portion of the report which deplored the lack of useful data on racial and ethnic groups. He encouraged implementation of the second recommendation to "...(1) coordinate development of common definitions for racial and ethnic groups; (2) instruct the Federal agencies to collect racial and ethnic enrollment and other educational data on a compatible and nonduplicative basis."

To undertake this effort, FICE, in June 1974, created an Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions. Charles E. Johnson, Jr., Assistant Chief, Population Division, Bureau of the Census, was named Chairman. Federal agencies with major responsibilities for the collection or use of racial and ethnic data were invited to participate. (A list of members begins on page iv.)

Although the report of the Subcommittee on Minority Education dealt only with people of Spanish and American Indian origins, the Ad Hoc Committee determined that useful racial and ethnic data collection would require

* Report never published.

reference to a broad range of race and ethnicity. It therefore took on the task of determining and describing the major groups to be identified by Federal agencies when collecting and reporting racial and ethnic data. Although the Committee recognized that there frequently is a relationship between language and ethnicity, it made no attempt to develop a means of identifying persons on the basis of their primary language.

The Ad Hoc Committee developed what it views as an integrated scheme of terms and definitions, conceptually sound, which can be applied to cover major categories of race and ethnicity and be used by all agencies to help meet their particular data requirements. This is important in view of the interagency nature of the Ad Hoc Committee's mandate and the variety of data collection needs of Federal agencies.

Complete recommendations begin on page 12. Recommended categories are shown below, followed by a discussion of the factors considered in arriving at each heading and definition. Since the categories reflect the views of a majority, rather than a consensus, of the Ad Hoc Committee, minority views are included in the discussion.

Recommended Categories

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native

   A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America.

Some Ad Hoc Committee members felt that the definition should refer to "original peoples of the Western Hemisphere" to provide for the inclusion in this category of South American Indians. The Committee eventually agreed, however, that the number of South American Indians in this country is small, and to include them might present data problems for agencies concerned with "Federal Indians," or those eligible for U.S. Government benefits.

Members agreed that the category may, at the option of the user, include a provision for responses indicating tribal affiliation of American Indians. In Alaska, the category may provide for identification of Aleuts and Eskimos as well as specific American Indian tribes.

2. Asian or Pacific Islander

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

This category presented a major problem to the Ad Hoc Committee in terms of where to draw the geographic line--east or west of the Indian subcontinent. The decision was east, which limits this category to peoples with origins formerly called "Oriental" and to natives of the Pacific Islands.

3. Black/Negro

A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Midway through its deliberations, the Ad Hoc Committee agreed that the definition for this category should be "A person having origins in any of the black racial groups." The majority thinking eventually changed for two reasons: (1) The other racial categories are based on the premise that each race originated in a particular area of the world; to be compatible, this category should also specify an area. (2) Adding a reference to Africa in the definition was a compromise for dropping such a reference from the heading. Although some members felt an alternative heading such as "Afro-American" should be added for this category, most thought that headings should not reflect nationality.

4. Caucasian/White

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, or the Indian subcontinent.

The major problem associated with this category, as with the "Asian..." category (above) was how to deal with persons from the Indian subcontinent. The question at issue was whether to include them in the minority category "Asian..." because they come from Asia and some are victims of discrimination in this country, or to include them in this category because they are

Caucasians, though frequently of darker skin than other Caucasians. The final decision favored the latter. While evidence of discrimination against Asian Indians exists, it appears to be concentrated in specific geographical and occupational areas. Such persons can be identified in these areas through the use of a subcategory for their ethnic subgroup.

Many members feel that this category calls for use of the term "White" either in conjunction with or instead of "Caucasian" in the heading because it will be more readily understood by survey respondents and the general public than "Caucasian" alone.

A minority position, expressed by members working in the civil rights area, is that the other four categories are for the principal minority groups in the United States, so this category should be for all persons who are not members of those minority groups. Their view is that the heading should be "Persons not included in the other four categories."

5. Hispanic

A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

Once members agreed that it would be inappropriate to refer to Spanish language or surname for purposes of identifying people

to be counted in this category, they decided not to use the term "Spanish" in the heading at all. The term "Hispanic" was selected because it was thought to be descriptive of and generally acceptable to the groups to which it is intended to apply. Representatives of one agency, however, still prefer "Spanish" to "Hispanic."

The minority view concerning the "Hispanic" category concerns its relationship to all the other categories. Some Ad Hoc Committee members feel that the "Caucasian..." and "Black..." category headings should contain the modifier "not of Hispanic origin" to ensure that all Hispanics are reported in the "Hispanic" (ethnic) category rather than any other (racial) category. Since this is basically a procedural, rather than definitional, matter, it is discussed in the "Suggested Applications..." section below.

Observer vs. Self-Identification

The Ad Hoc Committee feels that, whenever possible, it is preferable for an individual to identify his racial or ethnic background himself. There are instances, however, where this is not feasible, such as for the HEW Office for Civil Rights school compliance surveys. In such cases, an observer's determination of an individual's racial or ethnic heritage must be accepted. If such information is to go into an individual's personal record to be kept on file, the self-identification method should always be used to obtain the data.

Suggested Applications and Procedures for Use of Categories

As stated in the opening paragraphs of this report, the charge to the Ad Hoc Committee directed it to develop terms and definitions for collection of racial and ethnic data by Federal agencies "on a compatible and nonduplicative basis." This instruction conveys the responsibility for establishment of guidelines on how the proposed categories are to be applied in specific situations. Again, in the words of a member, the Ad Hoc Committee "... can perform a real service by assuring that whatever categories the different agencies use can be aggregated, disaggregated, or otherwise combined so that the data developed by one agency can be used in conjunction with the data developed by another agency."

There are essentially two ways to collect the data, and the categories suggested above can be used for either. Both are acceptable, but the Committee does not feel it can recommend the use of one over the other until both are field tested. The first alternative involves the use of five mutually exclusive categories. This format is particularly suitable for observer identification. Using the recommended terms and definitions (above), the array of categories would be as follows:

Racial/Ethnic Information

____Hispanic

____American Indian or Alaskan Native

____Asian or Pacific Islander

____Black/Negro, not of Hispanic origin

____Caucasian/White, not of Hispanic origin

The HEW Office for Civil Rights, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and Office of Federal Contract Compliance utilize this format because they need to be able to aggregate data on the minority groups with which they are concerned. There is no way of identifiying or separating individuals of different races included in the Hispanic category; however, an Hispanic representative on the Ad Hoc Committee points out that "Hispanics see themselves as one group ethnically and culturally despite the racial variety within the group."

The following two-question format illustrates the second alternative:

1. What is your racial background?

   ___American Indian or Alaskan Native

   ____Asian or Pacific Islander

   ____Black/Negro

   ____Caucasian/White

2. Is your ethnic heritage Hispanic?

   ____Yes ____No

The Bureau of the Census collects its data roughly along these lines via self-identification. This alternative also provides the kind of data needed by an agency like the Indian Health Service, for example, which requires information on Hispanic American Indians who are eligible for assistance under their program. Certain other agencies need data on Black vs. Caucasian Hispanics. This system provides greater flexibility for interchange of data because figures can be tabulated a number of different ways without double counting. Concern was expressed that some

agencies might attempt to use this format without either recognizing the need to eliminate duplication or developing the ability to do so. The avoidance of duplication is essential if the two-question format is used to collect data.

Summary data on the basic categories can be kept according to the following matrix. Subgroups consistent with these major categories may be added as necessary and/or appropriate (see following section on subgroups):

	Hispanic	Not Hispanic	Total
American Indian or Alaskan Native			
Asian or Pacific Islander			
Black/Negro			
Caucasian/White			
TOTAL			

Subgroups

The Ad Hoc Committee feels that agencies should be free to subdivide the five basic categories into particular ethnic groups as needed. One Committee member noted, "The fineness of any ethnic breakdown should be a function of the users' needs.... For small areas in which a user wants data on specified groups ... without a complete census, there could be geographically restricted surveys with high sampling rates.... The

impetus for such special surveys might come from complaints of discrimination filed with Federal, State, or local governments."

Although the Committee agreed not to try to identify all the possible ethnic subgroups in each category, a few examples follow. The "American Indian or Alaskan Native" category, as described above, could have an additional question asking for tribal affiliation or Alaskan Native group. The "Asian ..." category may be broken into subcategories "Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Hawaiian, or Samoan." The "Caucasian ..." category may be divided into such subgroups as "Asian Indian, Italian, Polish, or Russian," while the "Hispanic" category may ask for specific data on "Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican," and the like. If the identified subgroups do not cover all possible subgroups in the major category, the final subgroup should be "Other (name of category) _____" or "Other (specify) _____," depending on the purpose of the survey.

It is important to remember that data within major categories may be combined as needed, but data from one major category may never be combined with data from any other major categories without loss of comparability.

Consideration of an "Other" Category

The Ad Hoc Committee considered the possibility of creating a category, "Other," principally for individuals of mixed racial backgrounds and those who want the option of specifically stating a unique identification. Most Committee members opposed the use of an "Other" category because it would complicate a survey and add to its costs. The Committee conceded,

however, that the use of an "Other" category may be appropriate in instances where the self-identification method is used to collect data. When an "Other" category is used, the respondent must be required to specify the group with which he or she identifies. The Committee suggests that the number of legitimate responses in this category is likely to be small, particularly if the basic five categories are properly drawn and used. The use of an "Other" category requires the ability to edit "Other" responses carefully. Those which belong in the basic categories should be removed from this one. The number of responses in an "Other" category must be kept as small as possible or the usefulness of the survey would be adversely affected.

The Committee took the position that an "Other" category is undesirable in instances where observer identification is used to collect data because of 1) the likelihood that the observer will overuse it, and 2) the complications and costs which the category would add to the survey. For a survey to be complete, an observer must always make a decision, based on his own perceptions, about the most appropriate category in which to report an individual.

Exchange of Data

Regardless of the method of collection, when data are exchanged among agencies, the collection instrument should be included as a means of informing users of the collection procedures and, hence, the degree of comparability with data from other sources.

Recommendations

The following recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Racial and Ethnic Definitions were endorsed by the Federal Interagency Committee on Education on April 23, 1975:

1. FICE endorses the following five basic categories for collection and reporting of racial and ethnic data by all Federal agencies:

   a. American Indian or Alaskan Native

      A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America.

   b. Asian or Pacific Islander

      A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

   c. Black/Negro

      A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

   d. Caucasian/White

      A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, or the Indian subcontinent.

e. Hispanic

A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

2. FICE will request the Bureau of the Census to develop and conduct a field test to validate the recommended five basic categories, using several different questionnaire formats and wordings, and including a review of OMB-approved Federal reports currently in use. (NOTE: The Committee further recommends that a representative group of Ad Hoc Committee members have input into development of the field test based on the needs and desires of the agencies represented on the Committee.)

3. Upon completion of the field test, the Ad Hoc Committee will reconvene to review the results and, if necessary, consider alternatives and revised recommendations to FICE. Such recommendations should include guidance on a common collection procedure to be used by all Federal agencies to maximize compatibility of racial and ethnic data.

4. After FICE endorses final recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Chairman will transmit the categories and procedures to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget with the recommendation that they be promulgated throughout the Federal government as a standard to be used whenever an agency collects or reports data about race and/or ethnicity.